CLAIMS:

1.   A data communication method for operation between remote data processing systems, the method comprising the step of transmitting data between the systems via a communications channel having an associated path, characterised in that the method comprises the further steps of: -

receiving a session initiation stimulus at a Session Control System(SCS);

authenticating the received initiation stimulus in the SCS by referencing the stimulus source and stimulus content to a requested service;

generating a proceed signal to a multiservices provider on receipt of an authentication valid signal from a contract database associated with the SCS and generating a service event.

2.   A data communication method as claimed in claim 1 incorporating means for performing the additional steps of: -

generating a timestamp to indicate session commencement

generating and passing a service vector signal to the network;

transmitting a connection end destination address to the network

receiving a connection established signal from the network to indicate connection to a content server;

receiving a content vector from the content server the content vector indicating the type of content and a flag for identifying the existence of a service component related to content; and

receiving a grade of service of multipath vector from the network to indicate the nature of the multi-party service for the purposes of billing if the service includes a multipath component.

5   3.   A data communication method as claimed in claim 1 incorporating the further steps of : -

detecting the generated service event;

10   triggering of a service by a service user associated with the service event,

initializing setup of the triggered service using a traffic part of a service vector associated with the service event by a service gateway;

15   monitoring use of the service by the service user;

application of a tariff part of the service vector and timestamped service usage information from the service gateway for creating a charge record.

20   4.   A data communication method as claimed in claim 1 incorporating the further steps of : -

receiving from the network a signal to indicate that the path has been modified; and

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automatically generating a timestamp associated with the modifcation.

5.   A data communication method as claimed in claim 1 having means for:-

30   receiving a session termination stimulus at the Session Control System (SCS); and

generating of timestamp to indicate session termination in response to the received stimulus.

6. A data communications method as claimed in claim 5 wherein the received stimulus trigger generation of a session detail record (SDR) and the generation of a charge record.

7. A data communications method as claimed in claim 6 wherein the SDR is linked to a label of multi-protocol label switching (MPLS).

8. A data communications method as claimed in claim 1 incorporating the step of passing the label to a customer protocol stack of a customer system.

9. A data communications method as claimed in claim 1 using a service vector based incorporating naming information, descriptive information and network or content resource information.

10. A data communications method as claimed in claim 1 using a content resource vector incorporating a name, a type, coding techniques and value categories of still images and moving images.

11. A data communications method as claimed in claim 10 wherein the resource vector includes traffic control device parameters and flow rates.

12. A data communications method for processing data generated for traffic engineering purposes by accessing functionality or data produced through a traffic engineering applications programming interface and delivering traffic engineering data over an external data interface.